**TRAINING DIARY**

A road map is a very handy tool when you’re setting out on a long trip. It helps point you in the direction you want to go and can be a lifesaver when you’ve strayed off course.

An exercise training diary can provide the same help as a road map when you embark on an exercise program. In many ways, it’s a lot more informative because it’s a daily record of your journey to your fitness goals. So let’s take a look at how to get the most benefit from your workout log.

**1. Record the Basics**

Record the date, start and end times, body parts trained, and if you were joined by a training partner. Also be sure to record information about your cardio workouts.

**2. It’s more than just sets and reps**

For a weight training log you’ll certainly want to record the number of sets and reps you perform for each lift. Also be sure to indicate all warm up sets. This will help you prevent injury and may also indicate if you’re doing too many warm up sets.

Of course you’ll want to record the weight you use for each lift. Unless you have a pretty good memory, it’s difficult to remember from one workout to another what weight you used the last time. A training diary takes away the guesswork.

Also be sure to indicate if you use any special training techniques such as forced reps, negatives, pyramids, or super sets. A training diary is a great way to uncover if any of these techniques actually work for you or if they’re just making you over trained.

Also, recording the settings on exercise machines such as seat height and other adjustments can save you a lot of time during your workouts.

**3. Details Matter**

Details do make a difference! In the notes area of your diary page, be sure to record how you’re feeling at the start of your workout. Are you tired or are you ready to tear things up in the weight room? Do your muscles pump up quickly as your workout progresses or is the pump avoiding you today?

If you workout to music it may be helpful to record the tracks you listened to. This can also have a subliminal effect if you associate a great workout with certain music.

**4. Don’t forget about nutrition**

The other half of the fitness equation is diet. It’s vital that you record everything that you eat and drink throughout the day. Record the item, amount in grams, and time consumed. You can look up the calories at the end of the day and record the total.

**5. Record vital measurements**

Once a week you should weigh yourself and enter this into your training diary. Putting a tape measure to your neck, upper arms, chest, waist, thighs, and calves is a great way to track your weight training progress.

**6. Review your log before each workout**

Before you begin your workout, take a look back to the last time you trained the same body parts. Take assessment of the maximum weight and reps you did for each exercise. This is the time to mentally challenge yourself to get an extra 2 reps or increase the weight by 5 lbs.

**7. Interpreting the data**

Once you’ve logged several weeks of training data look back over it to see what kind of progress you’ve made. Pick one or two major exercises such as the bench press or squats. Have you been able to increase the weights for these lifts on a steady basis or have you hit a sticking point?

This is a good time to look for any correlations. Did your body weight begin to drop off around the time you hit the sticking point? If so, then maybe you’ve begun to over train. Also look back over your nutrition log and make sure you’re staying on track with your diet.

Maintaining an exercise diary is a little extra work, but it’s a commitment to your training program that will pay big dividends by keeping you on the road to training success!